

RETURNING TO GLIDING TRAINING – BGA GUIDANCE TO INSTRUCTORS

The BGA has published club restart flying guidance and restart/recency guidance for CFI's. Along with other guidance, [both are available here](#).

The following guidance is aimed specifically at instructors returning to dual and instructional flying.

Health

All instructors are reminded of the need to observe public health guidance regarding Covid-19 as detailed in the [BGA club restart flying guidance](#) or by your club.

Preparing to return to training

After such a long time away from flying, members previously under training may feel apprehensive about flying again, while others will be keen to get in the air.

We as instructors need to use the time before we can fly with members constructively and prepare them for their first flights when this is possible.

Some form of refresher ground school would be a good idea. A number of clubs have used Zoom, Teams, Skype etc. to keep club interest going over lockdown. These are ideal platforms for a group of students to get together with an instructor and review some exercises. Try to get your pupils minds set back into the cockpit and thinking about their flying. Find out from them where their gaps or lapses in knowledge are and chat over these online. Revising BGA safety guidance leaflets and 'Managing Flying Risk' would be good homework for your students.

Prepare yourself

If you have managed to get some solo time under your belt in the previous weeks, then this should have helped with your own handling skills. If not, then it's probably wise that you do initially fly solo to get back in the groove.

Like every other skillset, your instructing ability after the layoff may have faded. This will of course be determined by past experience, but you should think about and reflect upon how you would deal with student errors.

Student Errors

Errors can be broadly grouped in three areas:

Skill based refers to "stick and rudder" or other basic flight skills such as breakdown of visual scan, poor technique, distraction, etc.

Decision error refers to intentional behaviour that proceeds as planned, yet the plan itself proves inadequate or inappropriate to the situation.

Perceptual Error is when reality is different from how we think we see it. Visual illusions, spatial disorientation, mis-judgment of distance, height, airspeed etc.

Pre-Flight Briefing

Keep your exercise briefing focused on the aims, the detail of what will happen in the air, who will do what, and what standards you are expecting to see. But please keep it brief.

TEM

Review the main TEM aspects of the exercise. Please don't go overboard, and please don't forget your own TEM plan. Monitor your student's pre-flight checks carefully.

Air Exercise

Beware of overloading the student. The student may have forgotten quite a bit since last flying. As ever, keep things to manageable chunks and don't give the student too much of a challenge until that becomes appropriate, eg. to check understanding.

Debrief

As ever, debrief the flight encouraging the student to talk through the flight. Praise what went well. Signpost to the next step and whatever preparation the student can undertake meanwhile.

Late take-over of control

A review of the BGA takeover control guidance is highly recommended. Here is a reminder:

1. Take over IMMEDIATELY, even if you are a very experienced instructor, if P2 makes a potentially dangerous error, for example:

- on a simulated winch launch failure, does not lower the nose to the appropriate attitude, allows the speed to fall below the minimum approach speed, turns in the wrong direction, opens airbrakes before establishing adequate speed
- fails to release on a launch with wing drop
- low final turn
- shallowing approach
- fails to round out at an appropriate height
- takes spin recovery action in a spiral dive

2. Demonstrate safe handling / manoeuvring

3. If near the ground, do not give control back to the student

A large proportion of instructing accidents are linked to late take-over of control by the instructor. After a long lay-off we need to be extra cautious and recognise that if things are not going to plan we need to mitigate this by taking control of the glider. Stress, increased workload, loss of situational awareness, and poor decision making or judgement can all lead to things going wrong quickly, especially close to the ground. So recognise these factors and take over control early. It's always better to talk through these events on the ground after a safe recovery by the instructor.

The Comfort Zone Principle

Every pilot has their own level of comfort with risks in flying. As long as they are competent to operate the glider within their 'personal comfort zone', they should be quite safe. Occasionally stretching the limits of a pilot's comfort zone through new experiences helps to develop skills and knowledge.

After a long layoff, a student pilot is like any other in that his or her comfort zone may shrink for a while until experience is regained. Alternatively, the student pilot may have the same comfort zone but not realise he or she isn't current enough to justify the level of comfort! So proceeding carefully by matching instructional flights to the individual's needs is important. As an instructor, you will also have your own comfort zone. As we get back into instructing again, we need to make sure that we avoid stretching ourselves.

Help and advice is always available to you from your CFI. And if required, support can be sought through your senior regional examiner or the BGA training standards manager via the BGA office.

Kind regards

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